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AUTHOR Bjoraker, W. T.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this investigation was to determine patterns of establishment in farming followed by youth in five Wisconsin counties. Specific objectives were: (1) to determine who among the 1957 high-school graduates had ever farmed and were actually farming in 1968; (2) to determine the similarities and differences of those who stayed in farming and of those who did not in relation to 19 characteristics; and (3) to determine the progress made while farming. During the Fall of 1956, 764 male high-school seniors, including 346 who were farm reared or whose father was involved in farming, were selected for the study. All of the group who had indicated that their present occupation was farming or that they had farmed at some time in the years following high-school graduation were surveyed through mail questionnaires and telephone interviews. This report provides the study data resulting from a comparison of those presently farming and those who terminated. The comparison is made on the basis of education, youth club membership, job responsibilities, capital investment in home farm, background information, methods used to enter farming, capital accumulation, control of capital, tenure in farming, extent of involvement, use of credit, participation in continuning education, progress made while farming, involvement in farm organizations, approved practices followed, farming status achieved, capital investment and income, future plans, and why men quit farming. (DB)

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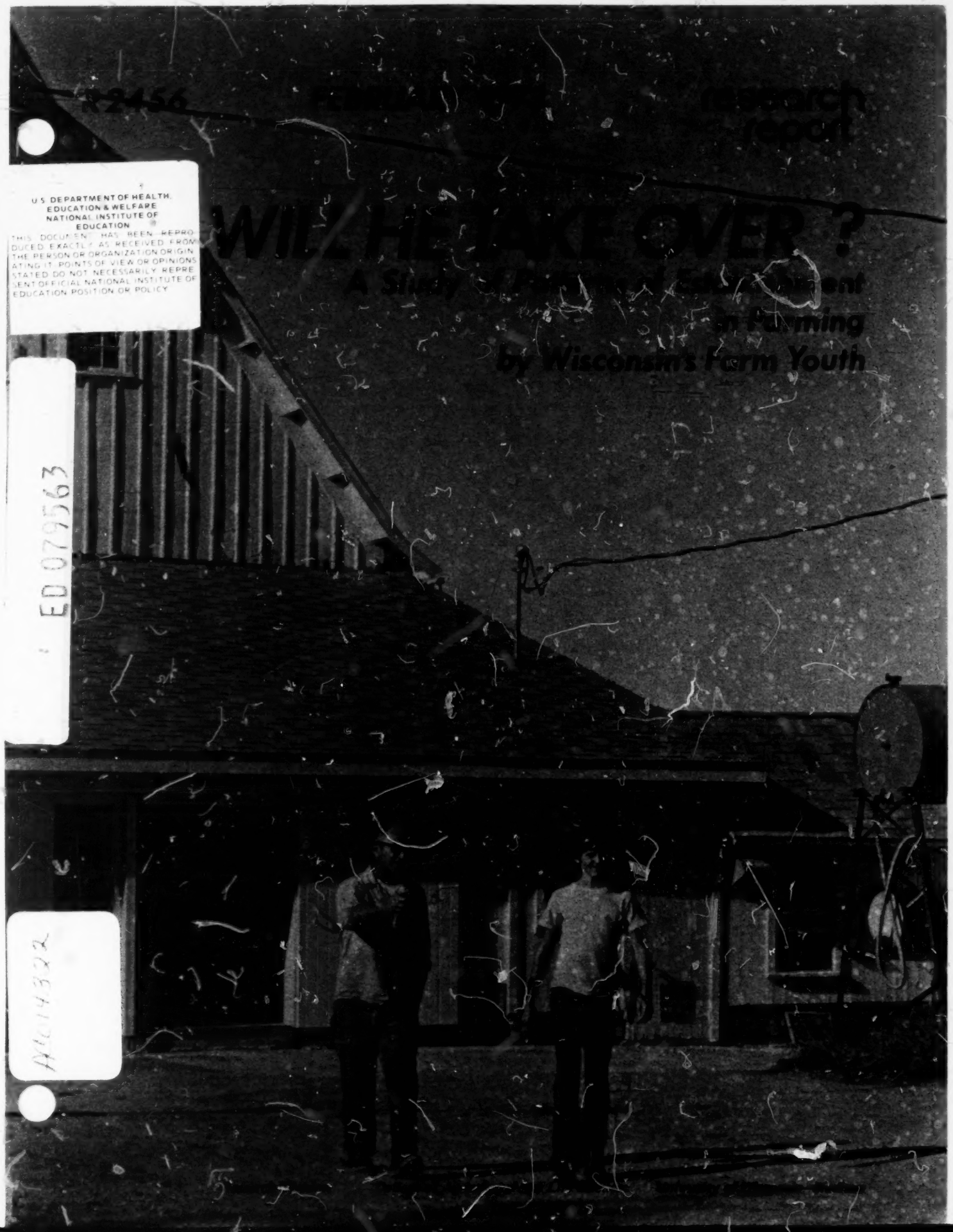
Research Report

WHERE HAVE I BEEN? WHERE AM I GOING?

A Study of Personal Development in Farming by Wisconsin's Farm Youth



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Summary

MOST YOUNG MEN INTERESTED IN FARMING WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE THE CHANCE. However, family financial and land assistance will need to be expanded.

PARENT'S COOPERATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT PLAY A VITAL ROLE. Such support helps stimulate young men to seek knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work habits necessary for a successful career in competitive agriculture.

MANY WAYS EXIST TO GET STARTED IN FARMING. Some respondents used similar procedures to get started in farming, but generally each must look at his own situation and take the steps most appropriate to his particular case.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS GENERALLY HAVE INSUFFICIENT ASSETS TO MAKE A BEGINNING IN FARMING. Seventy-five percent of those presently farming and 87 percent of those presently not farming had less than $1,100 of accumulated assets by the middle of their senior year in high school.

WAGES RECEIVED FOR WORK ON THE FARM AND OFF THE FARM ARE STILL IMPORTANT FOR ACCUMULATING THE NECESSARY CAPITAL TO MAKE A BEGINNING IN FARMING. About 59 percent of the farming group acquired the capital invested in the farming business from wages earned on the farm. Thirty-two percent said wages from off-farm work was invested in the operation.

WORKING AT HOME FOR BOARD AND ROOM OR WORKING AT HOME FOR AN INDEFINITE ALLOWANCE ARE UNSATISFACTORY METHODS FOR GETTING ESTABLISHED IN FARMING. Only two of the 20 individuals who began farming under this arrangement are progressing toward establishment in farming.

CREDIT IS ESSENTIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL ONGOING FARM OPERATION. Seventy-three percent of those presently farming used credit to finance the business compared to only 26 percent of those presently not farming.

THE CONTROL OF CAPITAL IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF FARMING INCREASES CHANCES FOR SUCCESS IN FARMING. Those individuals presently farming controlled substantially larger investment when they began farming than those who left the farm.

MORE INDIVIDUALS PRESENTLY FARMING WERE QUITE CERTAIN WHEN HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS THAT THEY WOULD HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME ESTABLISHED IN FARMING ON THE HOME FARM. Nearly half of those now farming said that their fathers were willing to develop a share agreement or that they felt there was an opportunity to take over the farm when the father retired. Only about 25 percent of those who have left the farm felt they had similar opportunities.

VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AIDS IN ESTABLISHMENT IN FARMING. A much greater percentage of the farming group were enrolled for three or four years of vocational agriculture in high school than those who have left the farm.

HIGHER SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT IS ASSOCIATED WITH ESTABLISHMENT IN FARMING. Eighty-four percent of those presently farming achieved a grade average of C or better in high school compared to 64 percent of those presently not farming.

YOUNG MEN BECOMING ESTABLISHED IN FARMING ARE INTERESTED IN POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY DEPARTMENTS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AND BY UNIVERSITY EXTENSION. Thirty-eight percent of those presently farming participated in educational meetings sponsored by the local agricultural department compared to 22 percent for those who have left the farm. Twenty-nine percent of the farming group also participated more in University of Wisconsin Short Courses, college attendance and special courses.

ACHIEVEMENT IN FARMING IS ASSOCIATED WITH USING APPROVED PRACTICES. The greater use of approved practices among those presently farming contributed substantially to increased milk and butterfat production per cow, more pigs raised per litter, and greater yields of corn, oats and alfalfa.

CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE BY THE YOUTH IN A DECADE OF FARMING. Over half of the individuals presently farming control investments in excess of $30,000. About 54 percent reported annual incomes between $15,000 and $30,000. Increases in gross incomes ranging from $1,500 to $10,500 were reported by 81 percent of those who are presently farming.

INDIVIDUALS PRESENTLY FARMING HAVE ACHIEVED A HIGH LEVEL OF JOB SATISFACTION. When asked what they plan to be doing in ten years from now, 94 percent indicated that plan to continue in farming.

NOT ALL ARE FARMING WHO DESIRE TO DO SO. Twenty-two percent of those who are no longer farming indicated that farming is the most desirable way of earning a living.

WILL HE TAKE OVER?
A LONGITUDINAL, FIVE COUNTY STUDY OF PATTERNS OF ESTABLISHMENT IN FARMING BY WISCONSIN'S FARM YOUTH[1]

W. T. BJORAKER, V. O. MARTINSON AND G. W. SLEDGE[2]

Introduction

Each year many people enter farming either full-time or part-time. Most prospective full-time farmers expect a farm income will enable them to live comfortably, rear and educate a family, and hopefully accrue an estate. Entrance into farming can occur in various ways. Some work off the farm to supplement income in earlier years, others purchase a small farm and rent additional land, while others rely on family assistance to obtain needed land and capital to make a beginning in farming.

To become established in farming generally requires considerable time. Establishment includes stability of tenure, greater return for labor and financial investment, and personal involvement in managerial decisions.

Limited study has been made of the establishment process and of the characteristics of the individuals who enter and persist in farming, in contrast to those who drop out. Helping young men develop the ability to become established in farming has been a long term objective of Vocational Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension Service, and other rural agencies. The staff of these agencies may have a special interest in this study.

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[1] This investigation was part of Wisconsin Experiment Station Project 985 "Opportunities and Methods of Getting Established in Farming for Wisconsin Rural Youth," a longitudinal study begun in 1956.

[2] W. T. Bjoraker is professor, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. V. O. Martinson was a research assistant in that department at the time of this study and now is a consultant in Agricultural Education, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. G. W. Sledge is Associate Dean of Resident Instruction and professor, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Objectives of The Study

The main purpose of the investigation was to determine patterns of establishment in farming followed by youth in five Wisconsin counties. The specific objectives were:

1. to determine who among the 1957 high school male graduates ever farmed and were actually farming in 1968.
2. to determine the similarities and differences of those who stayed in farming and of those who did not with respect to:
   a. method of getting started in farming
   b. participation in farm organizations
   c. participation in evening classes sponsored by a vocational agriculture department or extension programs
   d. participation in FFA and 4-H programs
   e. youth's evaluation of vocational agriculture and 4-H in the preparation for the business of farming
   f. number involved in part-time farming
   g. how initial capital investment was acquired
   h. use of credit in the farming operation
   i. use of approved farming practices
3. to determine the progress made while farming with respect to:
   a. increase in crop yields
   b. increase in livestock production
   c. net worth
   d. gross income
   e. crop acres
   f. livestock units
   g. capital invested

The Group Studied

During the fall of 1956, 764 students in 31 high schools were selected for this study. All were male high school seniors including 346 youth who were farm reared or whose father was presently involved in farming.

The group was not a random sample. However, the selection of individuals was representative of the total non-metropolitan population of Wisconsin. To insure this the following criteria were established:

1. geographic distribution
2. variety in types of farming, soil productivity, farm size and farm investment
3. services of vocational agriculture and agricultural extension
4. variation in the number of schools and vocational agriculture departments in the counties
5. cooperation from personnel in the counties
6. existence of homogeneous and heterogeneous population areas
7. the existence of low, medium, and high income areas

The counties selected were Adams, Iowa, Manitowoc, Polk, and Price. All individuals of the original group of 764 who had indicated that their present occupation was farming, or that they had farmed sometime in the years following high school graduation were contacted through mail questionnaires and telephone interviews.

Comparison of Those Presently Farming and Those Who Terminated

Education

Adequate mental ability and knowledge of agricultural subject matter are essential for successful operation of today's farm. Table 1 reveals that 87 percent of those presently farming had a high school grade average of C or better (or two or above on an A = 4 point basis). Those no longer farming achieved at a lower level, with 65 percent achieving a grade point of two or above. Twenty-two percent of the non-farming group had a grade point of one compared to only eight percent of the farming group.

TABLE 1

High School Grade Point Averages of Respondents Who Remained Farming and of Those Who Left.

GRADE POINT* AVERAGE	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
4	1	3	2	9
3	10	27	4	17
2	21	57	11	48
1	3	8	5	22
No response	2	5	1	4
Totals	37	100	23	100

*A = 4

Vocational training is important to an individual's success. Table 2 shows 78 percent of those presently farming were enrolled for four years in vocational agriculture as compared to only 48 percent of those presently not farming. Eighty-six percent of the farming group enrolled for three or four years in vocational agriculture compared to 57 percent of the non-farming group. Eleven percent of those presently farming had two or less years of vocational agriculture training, contrasted to 30 percent of those who left the farm. Vocational agriculture was not offered by some of the respondents' schools.

Several true-false tests were administered to the respondents while they were high school seniors to measure knowledge in various areas. Those presently farming achieved considerably higher scores on the tests in soils, crops, dairy cattle and farm management.

Youth Club Membership

TABLE 2

Years Enrolled in Vocational Agriculture for Respondents Who Remained Farming and For Those Who Left.

YEARS ENROLLED IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TRAINING	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
None	3	8	4	17
1	1	3	0	0
2	0	0	3	13
3	3	8	2	9
4	29	78	11	48
No response	1	3	3	13
Totals	37	100	23	100

Membership in 4-H and the Future Farmers of America was extensive. Those presently farming indicated 81 percent membership in FFA contrasted to 70 percent for those non-farming. Although vocational agriculture and FFA was not

available in all 31 schools included in the study, every county had 4-H club organizations. Membership in 4-H had been held by 70 percent of those who had terminated farming while 59 percent of those presently farming had been 4-H members.

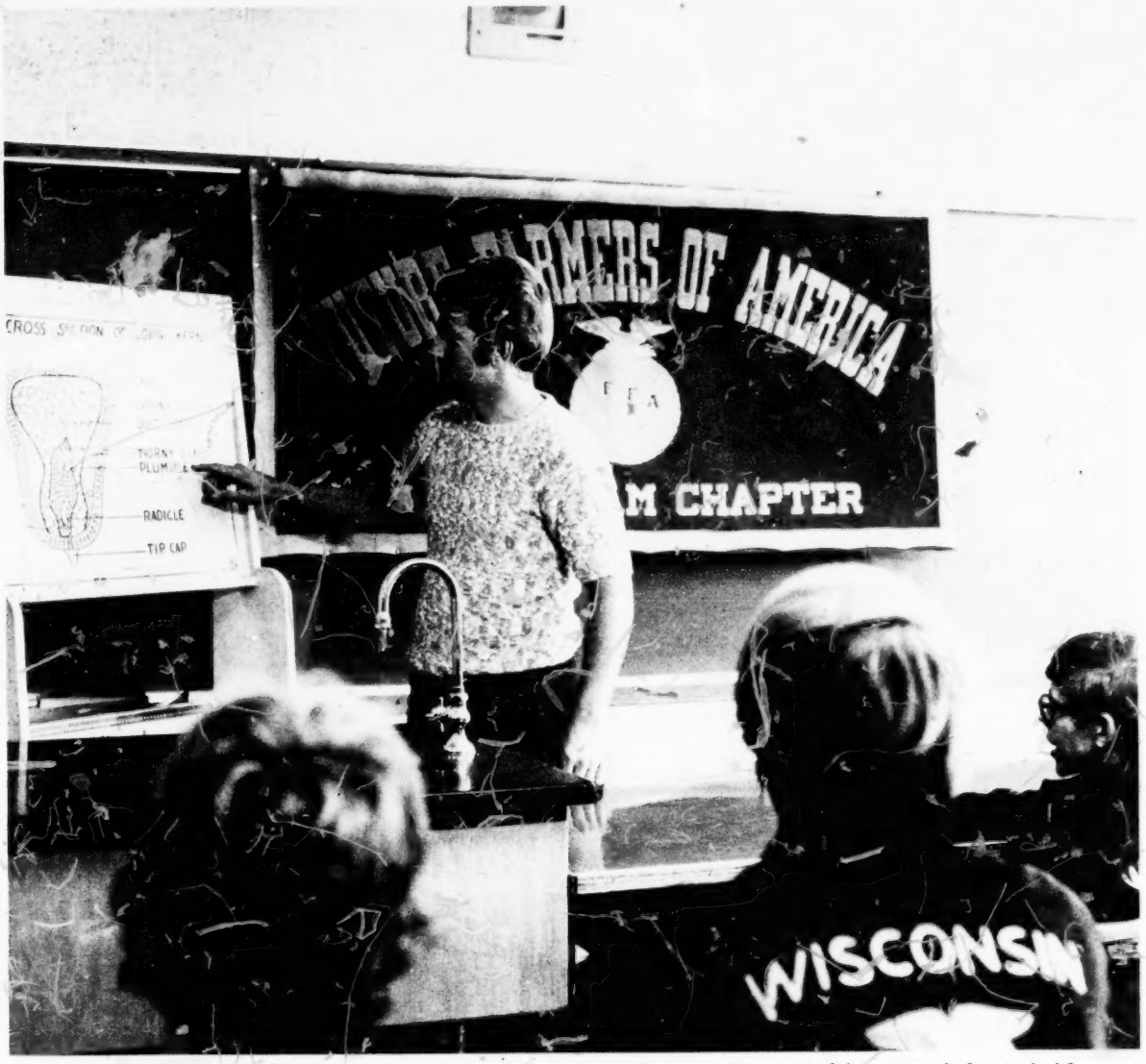

Figure 1. Vocational training in agriculture is important to career success. Seventy-eight percent of those presently farming had four years of Vo-Ag training compared to only 48 percent of those who left farming.

Job Responsibilities

Earlier research suggests that the extent of job responsibilities while living at home on the farm influences the youth's attitude toward farming as an occupation. It was found in this study that individuals who continue to farm had more job responsibilities on the home farm than did those who are presently not farming.

Capital Investment in Home Farm

When seniors, 48 percent of those now farming felt the opportunity for establishment was good and all of them felt the home farm was of sufficient size. Of those who left farming, only 26 percent felt a similar opportunity existed and 17 percent felt the home farm was too small.

Table 3 shows the distribution of capital invested in the home farms of the respondents when they were seniors in high school. More of the individuals presently farming came from home farms with larger capital investment.

TABLE 3

Estimated Capital Invested in the Home Farms of 1957 Graduates While High School Seniors.

DOLLARS INVESTED IN HOME FARM	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Less than $10,000	0	0	0	0
$10,000-$19,000	11	3	4	18
$20,000-$29,000	4	11	3	13
$30,000-$39,000	5	14	1	4
$40,000-$49,000	7	18	1	4
$50,000-$59,000	3	8	3	13
$60,000-$69,000	1	3	1	4
$70,000-$79,000	1	3	0	0
$80,000-$89,000	0	0	0	0
$90,000-$99,000	5	14	0	0
Over $100,000	3	8	1	4
No response	7	18	9	40
Totals	37	100	23	100

Background Information

Data on additional variables were collected when the respondents were high school seniors. No real difference existed between the two groups in terms of socio-economic status, their perception of their fathers' satisfaction in farming as an occupation, the extent of their enrollment in productive enterprises while involved in FFA and 4-H, and the size of the home farm in crop acres. The number of brothers in the family had no appreciable difference on an individual's establishment in farming.

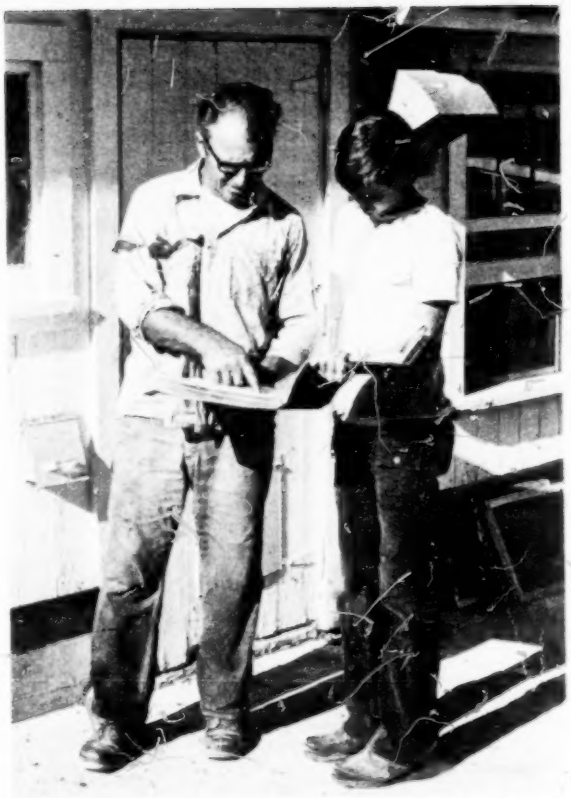

Figure 2. A youth's attitude toward farming is influenced by the extent of his job responsibilities on the home farm. Those who continued to farm had more job responsibilities on the home farm than did those who left farming.

Methods Used to Enter Farming

Wisconsin farmers used several methods to begin farming. Table 4 shows the status of the respondents as they began to farm. All those with a definite business arrangement, whether wages, partnership or renter, are all still farming. More family assistance was provided to the group presently farming than to those no longer farming.

TABLE 4

Methods Utilized to Make a Beginning in Farming for Respondents Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

METHODS USED TO BEGIN FARMING	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Board and room	0	0	6	26
At home--indefinite allowance	2	5	12	52
At home--definite allowance	1	3	0	0
At home for wage	9	24	0	0
Away from home for wage	0	0	0	0
Partaership with parents	11	31	0	0
Partnership with other than parents	2	5	0	0
Renter operator	10	27	0	0
Owner operator	2	5	0	0
No response	0	0	5	22
Totals	37	100	23	100

Capital Accumulation

Capital accumulation through earnings and savings is essential to begin and advance in farming. High school seniors accumulated a relatively low level of capital in terms of requirements for entry into farming. Twenty-two percent of those presently farming had assets over $1,100 while only four percent of the non-farming group had this amount.

The most important source of capital was from wages earned on the farm; off-farm wages were second. All other sources, such as wife's earnings, gifts, and inheritance, played a very small role in helping the respondents acquire capital. The two groups were compared on the amount of capital invested in the farming business at the time of entry into farming. Little difference was found.

Control of Capital

The amount of capital investment under control of the operator at time of entry is shown in Table 5. Clearly, in the group presently farming, more individuals controlled larger capital investments.

TABLE 5

Amount of Capital Controlled by the Operator at the Time of Entry into Farming for Respondents Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

INVESTMENT UNDER CONTROL	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Less than $1,000	4	11	4	18
$1,000-$2,999	2	5	2	9
$3,000-$4,999	3	8	0	0
$5,000-$6,999	0	0	0	0
$7,000-$8,999	0	0	1	4
$9,000-$10,999	1	3	1	4
$11,000-$15,999	3	8	1	4
$16,000-$20,000	0	0	3	13
More than $20,000	13	35	1	4
No response	11	30	10	44
Totals	37	100	23	100

Tenure in Farming

Data reveal that those presently farming have farmed from two to eleven years. The mean was 9.9 years. Thirty-five percent farmed from four to seven years; 59 percent from eight to eleven years, and 46 percent have been farming since graduation from high school. Those presently farming, but not continuously from high school graduation, were involved in other pursuits such as military service, college or other educational experiences. Some worked in feed stores, feed mills, factories, cooperatives and insurance.

Tenure on the farm for those presently not farming extended up to seven years with a mean of 3.6 years. Seventy-nine percent farmed up to three years and 22 percent from four to seven years. Some apparently stayed at home and helped their parents until a suitable job opportunity became available. Those who left the farm are now employed in bulk milk handling, the farm machinery business, engine assembling and banking. Others are employed by county government, feed mills, warehouses, electric companies, factories, hardware stores, and paper companies. A welder, mechanic, carpenter, United Parcel driver and entomologist complete the list.

TABLE 6

Extent of Involvement in Farming Immediately Following High School Graduation in 1957 Until 1968 for Respondents Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

OFF-FARM WORK	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
None	21	57	6	26
Less than 25 days	6	16	0	0
25 - 49 days	0	0	0	0
50 - 74 days	0	0	1	4
75 - 100 days	1	3	0	0
Over 100 days	7	19	9	39
No response	2	5	7	31
Totals	37	100	23	100

Extent of Involvement

The degree of involvement or intensity in farming is found in Table 6. Fifty-seven percent of those presently farming worked full time on the farm. An additional 16 percent worked less than 25 days off the farm during the year; 19 percent of the farming group worked over 100 days off the farm and therefore are considered part-time farmers.

Only 26 percent of those presently not farming devoted full-time to the farming operation during their tenure on the farm. Thirty-nine percent of the non-farming group worked off the farm more than 100 days and therefore were classified as part-time farmers. Some used part-time farming to get established in farming, while others worked off the farm to prepare for a full time off the farm position.

Use of Credit

Credit is a necessary tool in modern farming. Seventy-three percent of those presently farming borrowed money to finance the farming operation, whereas only 26 percent of those not presently farming used credit. Reasons for borrowing are listed in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Extent and Use of Borrowed Funds While Farming For Respondents Who Remained Farming and For Those Who Left.

PURPOSE FOR BORROWING	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Feed (hay, silage, small grain)	6	16	0	0
Feed (protein supplements, mill feed, etc.)	6	16	0	0
Machinery and equipment	26	71	3	13
Purchase livestock	11	30	4	17
Taxes and operating expense	8	22	1	4
Fertilizer	11	30	1	4
Real estate	14	38	3	13
Buildings	4	11	1	4

Those presently farming borrowed money more extensively for production purposes than those who left the farm. Most (71 percent) used capital to buy machinery and equipment. Thirty-eight percent used borrowed funds for purchasing real estate, 30 percent borrowed to buy fertilizer and 22 percent borrowed to pay taxes and operating expenses. Lesser amounts were used for feed purchases and for buildings. Those who left the farm borrowed less money.

Participation in Continuing Education

Continuing education keeps farmers abreast of modern technological advancement. Recognizing this, a summary was made of attendance in major ag-related post-high school educational programs (Table 8). Those presently farming were more involved in continuing education in agriculture.

TABLE 8

Attendance in Post High School Educational Programs by Respondents Who Remained Farming and by Those Who Left.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Young farmer classes	13	35	2	9
Adult farmer classes	8	22	2	9
Short course at UW-Madison	3	8	0	0
College	1	3	0	0
Extension meetings	11	29	3	13
Special courses	5	16	2	9
No response	--	--	--	--

Twenty-nine percent of those farming and 13 percent of those not farming attended one to three extension meetings. A closer look at participation in the extension meetings revealed that in the farming group five percent attended ten or more meetings and another five percent four to six meetings, without any comparable attendance of those no longer farming. When asked to rate the degree of helpfulness of the extension programs, 52 percent of those farming versus 13 percent of those not farming noted it as helpful.

The extent of post-high school participation in meetings sponsored by Vocational Agriculture Departments is shown in Table 9.

Figure 3. Continuing education keeps farmers abreast of Modern technological advancement. Those who stayed in farming were more involved in programs for post-high school agricultural education then were those who left farming.

TABLE 9

Participation in Educational Meetings Sponsored by Vocational Agriculture Departments by Respondents Who Remained Farming and by Those Who Left.

MEETING ATTENDANCE IN PAST YEAR	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
More than 10	6	16	0	0
7 - 10	5	14	3	13
4 - 6	1	3	2	9
1 - 3	2	5	0	0
None	20	54	13	56
No response	3	8	5	22
Totals	37	100	23	100

Slightly over half of both groups did not participate in these meetings (some schools do not have vo-ag departments). Among participants, those presently farming had the greatest exposure. Forty-nine percent found the meetings very helpful, but only 22 percent of those not farming agreed.

Progress Made While Farming

One question raised by the researchers concerned the progress made by each group while farming. Had those who terminated farming progressed as much as those who continued in farming? To answer this question a number of variables were studied. One dealt with the increase in the number of crop acres while farming. Table 10 shows that those who left the farm expanded farm acreage less than those who stayed.

TABLE 10

Increase of Crop Acres on Respondents' Farms While Farming for Those Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

CROP ACRES	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
No increase	11	30	6	26
0- 24	4	11	1	4
25- 49	5	13	1	4
50- 74	5	13	0	0
75- 99	2	5	0	0
100-124	2	5	0	0
125-149	0	0	0	0
150-174	1	3	0	0
Over 175	4	11	1	4
No response	3	9	14	62
Totals	37	100	23	100

Other variables used to measure progress while farming were: (1) number of dairy cows; (2) pounds of butterfat per cow; (3) pounds of milk per cow; (4) number of brood sows; (5) number of pigs raised per litter; (6) corn and alfalfa acreage; and (7) yields per acre of hay and oats. Those continuing to farm showed more increases in these areas than those who left the farm. The increases were similar to those in crop acres (Table 10).

Involvement in Farm Organizations

Strong leadership is one need of rural America. Participation in organizations vital to the farmer and holding officer positions in such organizations reveals leadership development. Forty percent of those farming held membership in one or more farm organizations, while only nine percent of those not farming were members while farming. None of the not-farming group had served as an officer compared to eight percent of those now farming.

Approved Practices Followed

The respondents indicated approved practices used in dairy, crops and soils, swine, sheep, and beef enterprises. The approved practices listed in the questionnaire came from technical literature and were examined by University specialists in the respective fields. Table 11 summarizes the number and percentage of respondents using approved practices.

TABLE 11

Use of Approved Practices on Respondents' Farms for Those Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

APPROVED PRACTICES	PRESENTLY FARMING (N=37)			PRESENTLY NOT FARMING (N=23)		
	n	%	mean	n	%	mean
Dairy	30	81	21.3	11	48	16.1
Crops and soils	28	76	8.6	10	43	7.9
Swine	11	30	14.9	5	22	12.0
Sheep	1	3	13.0	1	4	11.0
Beef	4	11	5.5	0	0	0

Dairy, crops and soils, and swine were most important for both groups. Considerably fewer of those respondents who left the farm indicated that they carried out approved practices, and the mean number of practices checked was lower in all five areas.

Farming Status Achieved

Data were collected to determine farming status achieved while farming, ranging from being at home with an indefinite allowance to that of being an owner (Table 12).

Sixty-three percent of those presently farming were owners, while only 30 percent of those not farming were owners when they left farming. Only five percent of those presently farming were in the "at home--indefinite allowance" classification, while 17 percent of those who terminated farming were in that classification. It should be noted that 22 percent of those presently not farming had been farming while in school.

Figure 4. Approved practices are associated with farming success. Those who continued to farm used approved practices more extensively than did those who left farming.

TABLE 12

Farming Status Achieved While Farming by Respondents Who Remained Farming and by Those Who Left.

FARMING STATUS	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Owner	23	63	7	30
Renter	6	16	2	9
Away from home for wage	0	0	1	4
At home--indefinite allowance	2	5	4	17
At home--definite allowance	1	3	2	9
Partnership	2	5	2	9
Father-son operating agreement	2	5	0	0
Work at home for wage	1	3	0	0
Farmed while in school	0	0	5	22
Totals	37	100	23	100

Capital Investment and Income

Farming is a business enterprise. To become established one must have sufficient capital, both of one's own and under one's control, to operate a farm large enough to produce an adequate income. A comparison of the two groups showed those presently farming had more capital invested in farming, more capital under their control, greater increase in gross income while farming, higher gross income in the last year of farming, and greater net worth.

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Table 13 shows the distribution of net worth accumulated by the respondents while farming. Fifty-seven percent of those still farming were in net worth categories of $15,000 to $30,000 and over, while only eight percent of those no longer farming had reached this level.

TABLE 13

Net Worth Accumulated While Farming by Respondents Who Remained Farming and by Those Who Left.

NET WORTH	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Less than $ 5,000	4	11	5	22
$ 5,000-$ 7,499	2	5	1	4
$ 7,500-$ 9,999	3	8	1	4
$10,000-$14,999	1	3	1	4
$15,000-$19,999	5	14	0	0
$20,000-$24,999	3	8	1	4
$25,000-$30,000	2	5	0	0
Over $30,000	11	30	1	4
No response	6	16	13	58
Totals	37	100	23	100

Future Plans

To determine the occupational stability of the respondents, they were asked for their plans ten years hence. All those not farming planned to work off the farm. Of those now farming, all but one indicated they planned to continue to farm. Evidently, occupational stability had been achieved.

Why Do Men Quit Farming?

Respondents were asked why they felt men quit farming. Table 14 shows their perception of why men leave.

TABLE 14

Opinions About Why Some Farmers Go into Other Occupations for Respondents Who Remained Farming and for Those Who Left.

REASONS FOR LEAVING	PRESENTLY FARMING		PRESENTLY NOT FARMING	
	n	%	n	%
Long hours	11	30	3	13
Hard to find hired help	3	8	1	4
High interest rates	1	3	0	0
Low income	24	65	5	22
High investment	5	14	9	39
More opportunity off farm	5	14	2	9
Financing	3	8	1	4

Those presently farming said the two main reasons were "long hours," and "low income." Those who had quit farming suggested "high investment" as the main reason and "low income" as second with "long hours" as third.

When asked the reasons for continuing to farm, 27 said they liked farming, six valued the independence, four felt the farm provided good living and income, two felt it was a good place to raise a family, two said pride in ownership, and six gave other individual reasons.

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Cover photo, showing Arnold Furseth and son, Dan on their dairy and poultry farm, Route 3, Stoughton, Wisconsin taken by Josef Lombardi.

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